

## **APPENDIX 10**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

#### **ENSURING THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S RESPONSIVENESS AND INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN THE BORDER XXI PROGRAM**

Responding to a need to better integrate environmental justice into the Border XXI Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sponsored a roundtable on environmental justice in the border region. The International Subcommittee of the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) convened the meeting. The purpose of the roundtable was to initiate a dialogue among the diverse environmental justice stakeholders in the border region and to hear firsthand about the concerns and priorities of residents living in the border region.

As a result of the roundtable, EPA has enhanced outreach and increased efforts to better integrate environmental justice into border activities. EPA is also working to develop an environmental justice strategy for the entire border region.

#### **WORKING WITH OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES TO ENCOURAGE INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN THEIR BORDER PROGRAM**

In an effort to encourage coordination between EPA and other federal government agencies working along the U.S.-Mexico border, EPA helped establish the Federal Regional Council Border Committee. The border committee was created specifically to enhance interagency coordination and serve as a venue for helping encourage integration of environmental justice into participating federal agency programs. Currently, only EPA Region 9 (California-Arizona region) has established a border committee; EPA Region 6 (Texas-New Mexico region) is considering the creation of a federal regional council during 2000.

At its monthly meeting on September 15, 1999, the Federal Regional Council Border Committee recommended that several actions be endorsed by the full Federal Regional Council, including: (1) construction of an interagency data base on environment-related border projects and (2) identification of opportunities for conducting outreach and technical assistance to border communities to enhance the information those communities have available to them about the availability of federal grants and programs. The Federal Regional Council Border Committee is supporting the President's Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border by creating complementary programs and supporting the task force's objectives and strategies.

#### **REDUCING RISK AND DISPROPORTIONATE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S. BORDER REGION**

Since a large percentage of the U.S. border area population is considered "minority" and at least 50 percent is considered below the U.S. federal poverty level, many of the projects initiated under the umbrella of the Border XXI Program have served to reduce risk and disproportionate adverse exposure to minority, low-income communities. The largest contribution to that effort has been funds provided to the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADB) for the construction of water and wastewater and solid waste infrastructure. Many tribal and minority communities have benefited directly from construction of these facilities, and more will benefit in the future.